

## **COMPREHENSIVE SYSTEM OF PERSONNEL DEVELOPMENT (CSPD)**

### **Annual Update of Comprehensive System of Personnel Development (CSPD) Information required by section 101(A)(7) of the Act.**

#### **Personnel Standards and basis for establishment**

The personnel standards for vocational rehabilitation counselors in Wisconsin are established upon the highest requirement in the State, Chapter 457 of the Wisconsin State statutes licensure requirements for the title of "Professional Counselor". To be licensed, one must have a master's degree in rehabilitation counseling or a closely related field, 3,000 hours of post master's degree clinical supervision, pass the National Board for Certified Counselors (NBCC) exam or the Commission on Rehabilitation Counselor Certification (CRCC) exam, and pass the Wisconsin Jurisprudence examination. This is the state personnel standard which exceeds the national standard.

All vocational rehabilitation counselors employed by the Wisconsin DSU in May 1992 were "grandfathered" under the professional counselor licensure provisions. Since 1992, state personnel rules require state professional counselor licensing as a condition of employment for all vocational rehabilitation counselors employed by DVR. All vocational rehabilitation counselors currently employed and recruited for employment by the DSU since May 1992 have met this standard upon hire, or have acquired a two-year "Professional Counselor Training License" and met the standard prior to the expiration of the Training License. All vocational rehabilitation counselors employed by DVR satisfy the conditions for employment under the Wisconsin professional counselor licensure provisions.

DVR counselors must complete at least 30 hours of continuing education every two years in order to maintain their professional counselor license in Wisconsin. DVR's HRD grant funds combined with funding from the operational budget, are used to provide an on-going, broad range of continuing education training opportunities to assist DVR counselors in meeting this requirement. DVR Case Coordinators, management and operational support staff also receive regular training opportunities and support.

DVR regularly evaluates and modifies its recruitment efforts and HRD training plan to ensure that all personnel, particularly vocational rehabilitation counselors, meet the highest requirements of the State applicable to their job classification.

In Wisconsin, vocational rehabilitation counselors are covered by the collective bargaining provisions of the Wisconsin State Employees Union (WSEU) contract. The employer may direct the employee to attend training, providing all expenses are paid.

**Procedures and Activities to assure an adequate supply of qualified State rehabilitation professionals and paraprofessionals**

The DSU believes that it currently employs an adequate supply of qualified rehabilitation professionals and paraprofessionals. Based on the DSU's goal of not more than 100 IPE cases per counselor per month, we believe that an adequate supply of qualified professionals will be maintained 5 years into the future.

On an annual basis, the state will review and update data to reflect the following information:

The DSU projects that it will need at least 292 authorized positions in 5 years to serve the number of individuals projected to be eligible for services. The following chart shows the FFY '06 and FFY '10 authorized FTEs by personnel category and the ratio of qualified vocational rehabilitation counselors and paraprofessionals to clients.

Personnel Category	7/1/06 Authorized Positions	14,000 monthly IPE caseload ratio of VRC clients	7/1/10 Authorized Positions	14,000 monthly IPE caseload ratio of VRC to clients
Voc. Rehab. Counselors	192.5	73	177.5	79
Case Assistants	74.5	189	68.5	204
Managers/ Supervisors	28	N/A	26	NA
Central Office Support	28.5	N/A	20	NA
TOTALS	323.5		292	

## **Ability to hire qualified Staff**

A major factor in Wisconsin that had previously inhibited DVR from hiring qualified counseling staff was a low pay compared to the private sector. As a result of the combined efforts of the Department of Workforce Development, DVR, and the Department of Employment Relations, and the Wisconsin State Employees Union, the VR Counselor pay range series received a substantial increase in FFY '04. The starting salaries follow.

\*\* VR Counselor in Training---\$16.486 per/hr starting

\*\* VR Counselor (A)---\$17.835 per/hr starting

\*\* VR Counselor (B)---\$19.292 per/hr starting

Note: Trainee is a new hire with a Masters Degree; Counselor Level (A) is a counselor after clinical supervision (within 2 years); and Counselor Level (B) designates a counselor with expanded work responsibilities.

DVR maintains a close working relationship with the three rehabilitation counselor training programs in the state to assist in recruiting, training, preparing and retaining qualified personnel, including persons from minority backgrounds and persons with disabilities. Students from these programs frequently serve paid internships. This provides a significant opportunity for the DVR to recruit new staff and students the opportunity to learn first hand how the DVR helps persons with disabilities to become employed.

## **Activities undertaken to coordinate the system of personnel development with personnel development activities under the Individuals with Disabilities Education (IDEA)**

In FFY 2006 the DSU and DSA maintained the interagency agreement with the state's Department of Public Instruction (DPI). The agreement commits DVR to the development of the Individualized Plan for Employment (IPE) prior to the eligible and interested student leaving secondary school. The agreement further allows for DVR staff involvement in the Individualized Education Plan (IEP).

The DSU has designated a liaison counselor to each school identified by Wisconsin's DPI as a referral source for DVR applicants. These DVR staff will be responsible for outreach to seek out students in need of DVR services and to provide ongoing education of LEA staff to encourage routine referrals of students who are potentially eligible for DVR services.

In addition to these on-going responsibilities of the DVR liaison counselors, a series of 20 training sessions were conducted throughout the state in each of the 12 districts of the Cooperative Educational Services Agency (CESA). Training teams consisted of staff from DVR and DPI as well as Parent Liaisons.

The DSU works together with DPI on the Wisconsin Statewide Transition Project, which also involves 18 other states.

**Development and maintenance of a system of determining, on an annual basis, information on the programs of institutions of higher education within Wisconsin that are preparing rehabilitation professionals:**

There are presently three institutions of higher learning within the state of Wisconsin that prepare individuals for careers as vocational rehabilitation counselors. These are the University of Wisconsin-Madison, University of Wisconsin-Stout and University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee. Each of these institutions maintains Council on Rehabilitation Education (CORE) accreditation and graduates of the master's degree programs in Rehabilitation Counseling are considered eligible for the CRC and NCC exams and for the Wisconsin Professional Counselor Training License. Annually, in June, the DSU requests from these institutions the numbers of students who graduated in the past year, and the number of students currently enrolled. This data is used to project and plan for qualified candidate recruitment potential for DVR hiring needs.

**Description of the development, updating and implementation of the DVR personnel training needs**

Current and projected DVR personnel training needs are included in, implemented and funded by the Federal Human Resource (HRD) grant which supports training for all DVR staff. Both the DSA and DSU conduct new employee orientation training for all new employees. In addition, new supervisors are required to attend training offered by the Wisconsin Office on State Employment Relations. In an effort to minimize retention problems and promote leadership development, all staff are encouraged to participate in appropriate capacity building training activities within the parameters of applicable bargaining unit guidelines.

**Coordination and facilitation of efforts between DVR, IHE and professional associations to recruit, prepare, and retain qualified personnel including personnel from minority backgrounds and with disabilities**

On an annual basis, contact is made with both in-state and out-of-state institutions of higher education that offer degrees in Rehabilitation Counseling.

This recruitment effort ensures a continual source of applicants as well as students who are interested in completing their graduate degree internships with the DSU. DVR recruits affirmatively at every level of hiring for qualified personnel from minority backgrounds and with disabilities.

**Description of procedures and activities DVR will undertake to ensure all employed personnel are appropriate and adequately trained and prepared**

Computerized training records are kept for each employee. Annual goals and accomplishment reviews (GARS) are done with each employee. These help the DSU identify where other training is needed, and by which staff. The annual plan for training all staff is included in the staff development grant (HRD) and is based upon an assessment of training needs.

**Description of the system for the continuing education of rehabilitation professionals and paraprofessionals with respect to:**

**Rehabilitation Technology**

The DSU has collaborated with both UW-Stout and UW-Milwaukee to more thoroughly analyze assistive technology needs and the availability of statewide resources. Survey results obtained in this research effort will be delivered in FFY '07 and will be used to determine what, if any, changes should be made to the Rehabilitation Technology services or resources delivered by the DSU as well as to determine what ongoing or additional training is required for both professional and paraprofessional DSU staff. In an ongoing effort, the topic of Rehabilitation Technology is included in DVR's Comprehensive Training which is offered to professional and paraprofessional as well as administrative and supervisory staff.

**Rehabilitation Act**

The Rehabilitation Act is a key element in Comprehensive Training offered to all staff by DVR. DVR also has a full-time program and planning analyst who provides frequent technical assistance and consultation to statewide staff on issues of service delivery as mandated by the Rehabilitation Act. Another program and planning analyst position is being added to assist with the demand for this resource and to provide training at the local office level.

In early FFY 06, DVR began offering the Wisconsin Vocational Rehabilitation Knowledgebase. The primary audience for this comprehensive, internet-based resource is the DVR's direct service vocational rehabilitation staff in Wisconsin. Every effort has been made to import, index, and cross-reference all of the laws, policies, procedures, and directives from a wide range of sources which govern and guide the performance of vocational rehabilitation duties and services delivered by DVR staff.

**Policies and procedures relating to the establishment and maintenance of standards to ensure that personnel, including rehabilitation professionals and paraprofessionals are appropriately and adequately prepared and trained.**

As previously noted and described, the personnel standards for vocational rehabilitation counselors in Wisconsin are established upon the highest requirement in the State, Chapter 457 of the Wisconsin State statutes licensure requirements for the title of "Professional Counselor".

In its recruitment materials and practices, DVR requires that applicants for vocational rehabilitation counselor positions meet the standards for employment as specified in the Wisconsin State licensure statutes. Only applicants who meet the hiring standards are interviewed and hired. Case Coordinators are the DVR paraprofessionals that support the vocational rehabilitation counselors. DVR establishes the job description and hiring requirements for these paraprofessional positions. DVR staff must all satisfy the hiring requirements of the state applicable to the profession or the state job description.

HRD funds complemented by DVR training funds are used to train vocational rehabilitation counselors (VRC) and assist VRC staff in achieving and/or maintaining a fully licensed status. These funds are also used to train case coordinators and other DVR staff... In most instances, training is offered simultaneously to groups of employees from varied employment categories.

As a critical component of training, quarterly meetings are held for DVR workforce Development Area Directors and Supervisors at which time various training topics are addressed. In a "train the trainer" model, WDA Directors and Supervisors are then responsible for training local field staff and recording the training event in the minutes of their WDA meetings.

**Provisions to maintain a minimum standard to ensure the availability of personnel to communicate in the native language or mode of a an applicant or eligible individual**

The DSU maintains the ability to communicate with customers in their preferred mode using a variety of resources.

The DSU affirmatively recruits staff fluent in Spanish and American Sign Language. The DSU maintains a list of qualified interpreters for Spanish, Hmong, German, Russian, and Polish languages in addition to 57 other languages, including sign language interpretation. The DSU has the technology to prepare Brailled materials.